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OFFICE OF PETITIONS

In re Application of :
John A. Lawton et al :
Application No. 10/779,865 :
Filed: February 18, 2004 :
Attorney Docket No. 102456-40308370 :
: DECISION ON PETITION
: UNDER 37 CFR 1.78(a)(3)
:

This is a decision on the petition under 37 CFR 1.78(a)(3), filed December 19, 2005, to accept an unintentionally delayed claim under 35 U.S.C. § 120 for the benefit of priority to prior-filed nonprovisional Application No. 09/948,713, as set forth in the concurrently filed amendment.

The petition is **DISMISSED**.

A petition for acceptance of a claim for late priority under 37 CFR 1.78(a)(3) is only applicable to those applications filed on or after November 29, 2000. Further, the petition is appropriate only after the expiration of the period specified in 37 CFR 1.78(a)(2)(ii). In addition, the petition under 37 CFR 1.78(a)(3) must be accompanied by:

- (1) the reference required by 35 U.S.C. § 120 and 37 CFR 1.78(a)(2)(i) of the prior-filed application(s), unless previously submitted;
- (2) the surcharge set forth in § 1.17(t); and
- (3) a statement that the entire delay between the date the claim was due under 37 CFR 1.78(a)(2)(ii) and the date the claim was filed was unintentional. The Commissioner may require additional information where there is a question whether the delay was unintentional.

The instant petition does not comply with item (1) above.

The reference to add the prior-filed application on page one following the first sentence of the specification is not acceptable as drafted since it improperly incorporates by reference the prior-filed application. An incorporation by reference statement added after an application's filing date is not effective because no new matter can be added to an application after its filing date (see 35 U.S.C. § 132(a)). If an incorporation by reference statement is included in an amendment to

the specification to add a benefit claim under 35 U.S.C. § 120 after the filing date of the application, the amendment would not be proper. When a benefit claim under 35 U.S.C. § 120 is submitted after the filing of an application, the reference to the prior application cannot include an incorporation by reference statement of the prior application. *See Dart Industries v. Banner*, 636 F.2d 684, 207 USPQ 273 (C.A.D.C. 1980). *Note* MPEP §§ 201.06(c) and 608.04(b).

Accordingly, before the petition under 37 CFR 1.78(a)(3) can be granted, a proper amendment¹ deleting the incorporation by reference statement, along with a renewed petition under 37 CFR 1.78(a)(3), is required.

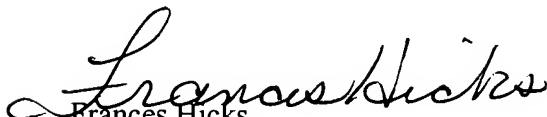
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Any questions concerning this matter may be directed to the undersigned at (571) 272-3218.


Frances Hicks
Petitions Examiner
Office of Petitions

¹ *Note* 37 CFR 1.121